

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, April 3, 2017, for the purpose of discussing the General Fund, General Government, Other Funds, Non-Departmental and Fund Transfer sections of the Proposed FY 2018 Budget.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:08 p.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Greenbelt Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Council Members Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V Jordan. Council Members Judith F. Davis and Edward V.J. Putens were unable to attend.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Nicole Ard, City Manager; Jeff Williams, City Treasurer; Dale Worley, IT Director; and David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Colin Byrd, Bill Orleans and Diane Oberg, News Review

Mayor Jordan welcomed everyone. There were introductions.

Overview

Ms. Ard thanked the department heads and Mr. McLaughlin for their work in preparing the Budget and indicated it was a \$28.4 Million Budget. She noted federal funding and the future of Greenbelt Station/FBI headquarters were unknowns. Ms. Ard indicated that health insurance renewal and the Collective Bargaining Agreement were still in progress. She reported the Budget included a \$90,000 increase for health insurance; an additional \$97,000 for the minimum wage increase and \$450,000 for employee compensation increases. Ms. Ard stated that the Budget included an additional ½ time position for Public Information, funds for economic development, support for unmet capital needs and funding to hire a consultant to assist with the Police chief recruitment.

Mayor Jordan asked about real estate assessments. Ms. Ard responded there was an issue in terms of commercial office vacancy.

Revenues & General Fund

Mr. Williams stated that there was improvement in residential assessments. He indicated that there was no growth in commercial office buildings. Mr. Roberts asked if Capital Office Park's assessment would go lower given the recent sales price. Mr. Williams believed this had already been factored in, but the office parks could make a case for a reduction.

Mr. Herling wondered what impact an economic development program might have on City revenues. Mr. Williams responded that he didn't know. Ms. Ard noted an update on Montgomery County's MOVE program to reduce the office vacancy rate.

Mayor Jordan expressed concern about a decrease in hotel-motel tax revenue given the number of new hotels being built in the area. He also thought admissions and amusement revenues may suffer due to Academy 8 being remodeled and changes in how people watch movies.

There was discussion about the school resource officer reimbursement. It was noted the City may not get the reimbursement for FY 2016.

Council asked about the University of Maryland shuttle program. Mr. Moran responded that the program was limited because the routes follow the academic calendar and only go to and from the campus.

Ms. Mach asked about the fluctuation in the Franklin Park partnership revenue. Mr. Williams explained the City had to remove the dedicated officer due to staffing shortages.

Mr. Williams reviewed the assessable base detail and explained how the City determines this estimate. He noted the additions were largely due to Greenbelt Station.

Mr. Williams discussed the Summary of Changes to General Fund Expenditures page.

Mayor Jordan asked about the increase in Account 120. Mr. Williams responded this was due to the leave payout for the recently retired City Manager.

Under Personnel Staffing, Ms. Pope advocated for an additional ½ time position for Animal Control.

General Government

Council reviewed the accomplishments for FY 2017.

Mr. Roberts stated that the City should not participate in a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) arrangement without voter approval. Council Member Mach noted that Council had previously voted to approve the TIF. Mayor Jordan and Mr. Herling discussed the benefits of a TIF.

Mayor Jordan asked about the RFP to upgrade the audio and video presentation capabilities in the Council Room and Community Center Multi-Purpose Room. Mr. Moran responded that the City had only received two proposals and both were submitted after the deadline.

Mayor Jordan asked about franchise renewal negotiations with Comcast and Mr. Worley provided Council with an update.

Mr. Herling asked about broadcasting on both the City's cable channel and GATE in high definition. Mr. Worley responded that the City had applied for high definition on its channel and the GATE high definition channel was part of the Comcast negotiations.

Ms. Pope asked about mobile technology for inspectors. Mr. Worley responded that staff hoped to implement this in the summer. Ms. Pope stressed the need to move forward on a City-wide document management solution.

Mr. Herling asked about an online Q&A/customer service system. Mr. Worley responded that staff had tried this system and it was not widely used.

Mayor Jordan reviewed the Issues and Services section in General Government. He stated that the City needed to invest more funds in its infrastructure and noted that delaying these projects only increases these costs.

Mr. Herling asked about the ability for citizens to conduct research on upcoming issues via the City website. Mr. Worley responded there were both internal document management efforts and the provision of better access for external users.

Under Finance & Administrative Services, Mr. Williams indicated that two employee groups would be formed to update the performance appraisal system and improve the payroll reporting system. He also noted an initiative to establish online payment options for waste collection and personal property tax.

Under Information Technology, Mr. Worley discussed the implementation of the Next Generation 911 service to allow electronic (i.e. texts) calls for service.

Mayor Jordan cited the upgrade of the Council Room and Community Center Multi-Purpose Room (MPR) and website redesign as management objectives under Public Information and Community Promotion. Mr. Herling asked about cablecasting/streaming Wednesday work sessions. Ms. Pope noted the cost to upgrade the Community Center MPR was quite high and suggested further discussion with CARES about modifying their schedule. Mayor Jordan expressed concern that half the work sessions are not videotaped. Mr. Roberts did not favor changing the CARES schedule, but did believe CARES needed a different space and suggested the historic Greenbelt Middle School. Ms. Mach agreed that this school space should be utilized.

Under Public Officers, Mayor Jordan expressed interest in membership in the Prince George's Chamber of Commerce and asked Ms. Ard to research this cost.

Mr. Orleans asked about the increase in Other Services under Public Information. Mr. Williams agreed to check and respond to Council. He later noted these funds were for a website redesign.

Mr. Byrd asked about the Legal Counsel budget and what the anticipated costs were for the Apgar matter. Mayor Jordan responded that Council could not discuss an ongoing lawsuit. Ms. Ard noted there were collective bargaining legal costs. Mr. Byrd commented on the budgets for training and participation in Maryland Municipal League, National League of Cities and Council of Governments and asked how this benefitted the City. Mayor Jordan responded these costs were not that large in the context of a \$28 Million Budget. Ms. Mach cited: playful cities,

Let's Move and the heroin/opioid task force report as benefits to the City. Ms. Pope stressed this was a professional development for Council Members. Mr. Herling noted that collaboration with other communities has benefits to Greenbelt. Mr. Worley cited the Everbridge notification system as a tangible benefit.

Other Funds

There was discussion of the Cemetery Fund. Ms. Mach reiterated the need for an urn wall. Mayor Jordan suggested consideration of a scatter garden. Mr. Moran noted an urn wall was on the un-programmed list. Ms. Pope wanted some cost information on this proposal.

Under Debt Service Fund, Mr. Williams noted the City was well below its authorized debt limit.

Council discussed the list of items in the Replacement Fund.

Non-Departmental

Council reviewed this section.

Mayor Jordan asked for an explanation of Fund Transfers. Mr. Williams explained that staff had made an effort to increase the transfers in the Replacement Fund and Building Capital Reserve Funds. Mr. Moran noted these fund transfers would need to be increased in future years due to aging City facilities and unmet capital needs.

Information Items

Ms. Pope asked how the City would proceed regarding the Community Animal Response Team (CART) request. Ms. Ard responded that this would need to come back to Council. Mayor Jordan and Ms. Mach suggested CART follow the recognition group process.

The meeting ended at 11:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*David E. Moran
Assistant City Manager*